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## THE CARDENIO-DOUBLE FALSEHOOD PROBLEM

### I

Among the plays attributed to Shakspeare on unsubstantial grounds, *Double Falsehood*, published by Lewis Theobald in 1728, has a peculiar claim to interest because of attempts to identify it with a non-extant drama called "*The History of Cardenio* by Mr. Fletcher and Shakespeare." The latter was entered on the *Stationers' Register* for Humphrey Moseley in 1653, but was probably acted about 1613.<sup>1</sup> Theobald declared that the former was "revised and adapted" from an original written by Shakspeare. Since the plot of *Double Falsehood* is taken from the story of Cardenio in *Don Quixote* through Shelton's translation, and it is naturally supposed that the lost *History of Cardenio* was derived from the same source, there seems a reasonable probability that Theobald had old manuscripts in his possession as he claimed, and that one of these was recorded for Moseley in 1653.

The great difficulty in the way of anyone who would prove or disprove Theobald's assertion arises from his confessed revising and adapting to the needs of the eighteenth-century stage. We do not know to what extent he altered the original, but if he really had an old play to begin with, there is probably so much of his own work in it as it now stands that internal evidences of authorship must be partial and unsatisfactory at best. On the other hand, because of the sale of Theobald's library after his death, it is likely that such manuscripts—if he really had them—were lost. So external evidence, also, seems to be of little value. Many of the scholars who have investigated the problem, however, are of the opinion that *Double Falsehood* is not entirely Theobald's work, even if it is not, as he claimed, by Shakspeare.

<sup>1</sup> "Probably identical with a *Cardenno* acted at court by the King's men in May, 1613, and a *Cardenna* in June, 1613."—Neilson and Thorndike, *The Facts about Shakespeare*, New York, 1913, p. 160. For the full text of Lord Stanhope's item, see W. E. Henley's introduction to the Tudor edition of *Don Quixote*, xlvii (Shelton's tr.), London, 1896.

Mr. Gamaliel Bradford, Jr., in *Modern Language Notes*, 1909,<sup>1</sup> added an interesting article to the literature of the subject, in which he shows that in spite of the changes and obvious revamping of the play, *Double Falsehood* still retains palpable indications of Fletcher's hand and possible traces of another Elizabethan's.

Mr. Bradford's article was answered in *Modern Philology*,<sup>1</sup> by Professor Rudolph Schevill, who tried to show conclusively that *Double Falsehood* was not taken from Shelton's translation at all, but from a novel entitled *The Adventures on the Black Mountains*, in a collection edited by Samuel Croxall in 1729.<sup>2</sup> Schevill shows that the novel and play parallel each other in the order of events much more closely than either does the original story in Shelton, that the novel contains details of the story common to itself and *Don Quixote* which are not found in the play, and that there seem to be no details common to the original and *Double Falsehood* which are not in *The Adventures* also. From these evidences he concludes that the novel and not Shelton's translation is the source of the play. The apparent chronological difficulty he overcomes by reasoning that since both play and novel were printed by John Watts, Theobald probably saw the manuscript of the latter early enough to base the play upon it. In summary, Professor Schevill says:

Either the play is neither by Fletcher nor Shakespeare, or the play is not taken from *The Adventures on the Black Mountains*. But I have shown that there is a definite relation between the novel and the play, namely that the latter is based upon the former, and thus belongs to the eighteenth century. . . . If it can be asserted that *Double Falsehood* is a slavish dramatization of the novel, it has become unnecessary to insist that there is not the remotest possibility that Theobald had a lost *History of Cardenio* either by Shakespeare or Fletcher as a basis for his play, *Double Falsehood*.

Before making any further attempts to connect *Double Falsehood* with the lost *Cardenio*, it becomes necessary to show that the former does *not* depend on *The Adventures on the Black Mountains*, for

<sup>1</sup> Gamaliel Bradford, Jr., "The History of Cardenio by Mr. Fletcher and Shakespeare," *MLN*, XXV, 51 ff.; Rudolph Schevill, *Theobald's Double Falsehood? Mod. Phil.*, IX, 285 ff.

<sup>2</sup> "Select Collection of Novels and Histories in Six Volumes. . . . All New Translated from the Originals, by several eminent Hands, Second edition. London, 1729," I, 313-38. This possible source is also noted by William Jaggard, *Shakespeare Bibliography*, Stratford-on-Avon, 1911, p. 3.

Schevill's case, if sound, seems to preclude any possibility of Elizabethan authorship. As he pointed out, there are some passages common to the novel and *Don Quixote* which are not found in the play. This is evidence beyond doubt that the "translator" of Croxall's version went to Shelton for his main story. But he has overlooked some verbal and phrasal parallels between Shelton and *Double Falsehood* which indicate that the author or authors of the play also went directly to this early translation of Cervantes. For the excerpts given below, notice that the novel has either no parallel passage or one which does not follow Shelton as closely as that from the play.

1. Shelton, IV, i, 2:

How much more grateful companions will these craggies and thickets prove to my designs, by affording me leisure to communicate my mishaps to heaven with plaints; then that if any mortall man living, since there is none upon earth from whom I may expect counsell in doubts, ease in complaints or in harmes remedie.

*Double Falsehood*, p. 48:

How much more grateful are these craggy Mountains,  
And these wild Trees, than things of nobler Natures,  
For these receive my plaints and mourn again  
In many Echoes to me. All good People  
Are faine asleep forever. None are left,  
That have the sense, and Touch of Tenderness  
For Virtues sake: No, scarce their Memory:  
From whom I may expect Counsel in Fears,  
Ease to Complaining, or Redress of Wrongs.

*Adventures* contains nothing at all.

2. Shelton, IV, i, 3:

This bodie, since it is not Lucinda, can be no human creature, but a divine.

*Double Falsehood*, p. 49:

Since she is not Leonora, she is heavenly.

*Adventures* contains nothing of this.

3. Shelton, IV, i, 5 and 11:

Lady, whatsoever you be, stay and fear nothing . . .  
 . . . is it possible that you are named Dorothea?

*Double Falsehood*, p. 50:

Stay, Lady, stay: can it be possible  
 That you are Violante?

*Adventures*, p. 334:

The story teller whom he now recollected to be Dorothea. . . .

4. Shelton, III, xi, 267:

(*Messenger to Cardenio*) . . . For Sir, I know you very well.

*Double Falsehood*, 23-24:

*Leon.* Know you Julio, Sir?

*Mess.* Yes, very well; and love him, too, as well.

Nothing in *Adventures*.

5. Shelton, III, xi, 269:

I carry about with me a poniard secretly, which may hinder more resolute forces by giving an end to my life.

*Double Falsehood*, p. 29:

Stage direction, *She shows him dagger*. Leonora then threatens to kill herself if Julio does not hide while the wedding takes place.

*Adventures* contains no mention of dagger until the episode of Leonora's fainting later, details of which are common to all three.

6. The song of Cardenio (Shelton, III, 250) may have suggested a similar lament sung by Violante in *Double Falsehood* (47). There is no song in the novel.

7. Shelton, IV, i, 1:

I esteemed it better to find Don Fernando unmarried than married, presuming that yet the gates of my remedy were not wholly shut . . . heaven had preadventure set that impediment on the second marriage, to make him understand what hee ought to the first:

*Double Falsehood*, p. 37:

Yet there remains a little Spark of Hope  
That lights me to some Comfort. The Match is crossed;  
The Parties separate: and I again  
May come to see this Man that has betrayed me;  
And wound his Conscience for it;

This motive for her following him is not given in *Adventures*. She leaves home "to be lost to her friends."

It must be clear from a comparison of these passages that the original author or authors of *Double Falsehood* not only followed Shelton's translation, but followed it closely in some details of the story. Some of the excerpts of the play, notably the first three listed, are little more than paraphrases of the original. We must conclude, then, that both the translator of *The Adventures* and the authors of *Double Falsehood* went to Shelton for the story of Cardenio.

But how are we going to account for the obvious parity of the two in details not found in Shelton?

The first edition of Croxall's novels and histories (1720-22) was so well received by the public that a second was brought out in 1729 with ten additional selections, one of which was *The Adventures* (see full list in preface to second edition). Of the new tales, this was the only one from Cervantes or a Spanish source, although the first edition probably contained a good number. The three volumes I have seen of the six-volume set contain four, all derived from the *Novelas Exemplares*.<sup>1</sup> These stories from the *novelas* actually are what Croxall professes the entire collection to be—mere translations. The story of Cardenio in *The Adventures*, on the contrary, is considerably changed from the original in Shelton. It is shortened to two-thirds, the order of events is changed, and some details are added, as Schevill himself shows. This is hardly "New Translated from the Original." Such a change in the original Cardenio story would be made rather for a dramatic purpose than for any other.

In view of the similarity in general outlines of *The Adventures* and the play, it seems plausible that while Croxall was planning his second edition he perceived the popularity of *Double Falsehood* as

<sup>1</sup> *The Jealous Estremaduran*, I, 243 ff.; *The Little Gypsy*, V, 1; *The Spanish Lady of England*, VI, 189; *The Lady Cornelia*, VI, 239.

an acted play,<sup>1</sup> recognized its source in Cervantes, and determined to take advantage of the public interest in the story by including it in his new work. Consequently, he (or the "translator," whoever he was) furbished up Shelton, as Shevill says, but did so under the conscious or unconscious influence of the play with which he was familiar. The result of this process Croxall calls on the title-page of the story, "A Tale upon which the Plan of a Posthumous Play, called *Double Falsehood*, was written originally by W. Shakespeare."<sup>2</sup> Schevill quotes the statement in the preface, which is "This is the novel from which the Plan of a Posthumous Play, written originally by Shakespear, called *Double Falsehood*, was taken," and assumes that the novel referred to is *The Adventures*. Is it not more likely that by "novel" or "tale" Croxall merely referred to the story of Cardenio in *Don Quixote* of which his version purported to be a translation? I find no allusion to any intimacy between Theobald and Croxall such as we should expect if the former was in the habit of looking over the other's manuscripts more than a year before their publication.

There can be little doubt, then, about the immediate source of *Double Falsehood*. But whether it was written, in its original form, soon after the publication of Shelton's translation (1612) as must have been the case with the *History of Cardenio*, or was composed at a much later period, is harder to determine.

## II

How does *Double Falsehood* compare with Theobald's acknowledged work?

Owing to the wholesale leveling which Theobald may have effected in revising the play, internal evidence obtained by verse tests must be relative and approximate indeed. Nevertheless, I have applied the tests for feminine endings, run-on lines, and weak and light endings—all of which proved of value in determining Elizabethan authorship—and a few additional tests, with results which appear at least

<sup>1</sup> For the success of *Double Falsehood* on the stage, see *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1824, p. 223; and Genest's *Some Account of the English Stage*, Bath, 1832, III, pp. 203-4.

<sup>2</sup> "Selection Collection," etc., I, 311.

significant. For this purpose, *The Persian Princess*, *Electra* (a translation), and *Orestes* were most available, works perhaps as representative as any of Theobald's style in blank verse. The first two were written some time before the publication of *Double Falsehood*, the last, two or three years after. Yet note that the three conform to one another more closely in the peculiarities of style I have tabulated than any one of them does to *Double Falsehood*.

	Lines	F. E.	R. O. L.	W. and L. Ends	Fem. Caes. Line Pause
<i>P. Princess</i> (1711).....	1278	20.5	15	.08 (10)	12
<i>Electra</i> (1714).....	1376	16	9	.06 (8)	11
<i>Double Falsehood</i> (1728)....	1447	38.1	18.3	.15 (22)	19.6
<i>Orestes</i> (1731).....	1606	22.6	10	.025 (4)	8*

\* I adopted the definitions of the run-on line and the weak and light endings which are found in the report of the St. Petersburg Shakespeare Circle (*Englische Studien*, III, 473 ff.). Only the blank verse was considered, and full lines were counted in every case.

*The Perfidious Brother* (1715) was not examined because of the uncertainty as to its authorship. See *Dictionary of National Biography*, LVI, 119.

Mr. Bradford noted in his paper on *Double Falsehood* the frequency of the feminine ending composed of two monosyllabic words—a very remarkable characteristic of Fletcher's style. There are in all 137 such endings in *Double Falsehood*, whereas *Electra* and *Orestes* have 20 and 27 respectively. In the first, 30 different words are given the final unemphatic position, while in *Electra* only 6 and in *Orestes* 7 are thus used. Theobald's range is apparently limited to "it," "me," "them," "him," "you," and "us," only three other words being found in the two plays. In *Double Falsehood*, not only is there a suggestive variety, but "Sir" and "not" are found 11 and 10 times used in this way. Now Fletcher was noticeably fond of these words as endings, and his use of them is exemplified in *The Chances*, written about 1615, where "Sir" is found 22 times and "not" 11 times. In this play, Fletcher uses 39 different final words, with a total of 234 cases. Since a discussion of Fletcherian authorship belongs to another part of this paper, let it suffice here to note that all our figures seem to support Bradford's case. We must admit, at any rate, that whether *Double Falsehood* was the work of Theobald's own pen or not, in these particulars it shows an appreciable variance from his earlier and later styles.



## III

Are there internal evidences of two styles?

Bradford, who thinks so, assigns II, iii; IV (except about fifty lines near the beginning); and V (except a small portion which he does not define) to Fletcher. He believes the remainder shows occasional traces of the most masterful Elizabethan hand, although he admits that for the most part it is far below the poetic or dramatic quality of Shakspeare. I have based my tests on Bradford's division.

A graphic representation with one line to indicate the number of feminine endings in each ten verses and another to show the run-on lines reveals such a perceptible change of manner as he has suggested at the beginning of Act III, scene iii. Feminine endings are more frequent after this point and run-on lines noticeably less common. Whatever evidence is thus furnished of a dual authorship receives support from the other tests I made.

	Parts Possibly by Fletcher	By Another
Lines.....	754	693
Feminine endings.....	44.2	32
Run-on lines.....	15.2	21.5
Weak and light endings....	.39 (3)	2.7 (19)
Feminine caesural line pauses	16	13.3
Mid-stopped speeches.....	30	44.5*

\* Bradford finds 47 per cent of feminine endings in the Fletcher part. Since he does not state definitely how much of Act V he considers Fletcher's, I have been able to follow his division only approximately.

The parts by Fletcher show a larger percentage of feminine endings. In the other peculiarities of style, the remaining parts predominate, especially in the weak and light endings. Nineteen to three is a very significant difference.

If these figures make it evident that there is a real difference of style in the two parts of *Double Falsehood* as Bradford has distinguished them, they serve to demonstrate even more clearly and effectively the difference between Theobald's acknowledged work and the play under discussion. It seems hardly possible that the portion of the latter which contains 44.2 per cent of feminine endings was composed in 1727 by the same hand that wrote *Orestes* three years later with only 22.6 per cent. Nor does it appear any more likely

that the first part of *Double Falsehood* which contains 19 weak and light endings was written by the same author as the play of 1730 in which there are only 4 altogether. In the same way we may compare the 10 per cent of run-on lines in Theobald's *Orestes* with the 21.6 per cent in *Double Falsehood*. Perhaps other figures are unnecessary to show that the latter is not like the avowed works of Theobald, and that there are in it traces of two manners of writing.

The weak and light endings which we noted above as frequent in the first part of *Double Falsehood*, were so characteristic of Shakspeare's later style that they suggest another line of inquiry.

#### IV

Does internal evidence support the possibility that the original of *Double Falsehood* was identical with the *History of Cardenio*, written by Shakspeare and Fletcher about 1613?

Nearly all scholars now believe that Shakspeare and Fletcher were joint authors of *Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Henry VIII*, and that these plays were written about this time. I have made a comparison of the parts assigned each author with the parts of *Double Falsehood* using for this purpose the division of *Two Noble Kinsmen* which is to be found in *The Facts about Shakespeare* (p. 160) and the partition of *Henry VIII* employed by Thorndike in his *Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare*.<sup>1</sup> The results appear in the table on p. 278.

Notice that the three columns of figures correspond in a general way. That is, the three percentages of feminine endings in the upper half of the table are smaller than the three in the lower half, and the percentages representing the frequency of run-on lines in the lower half are in each case smaller than those above. The difference is always in the right direction. The percentages of weak and light endings correspond most noticeably. In *Double Falsehood*, the proportion of feminine endings for the second part has more significance than would appear from the figure 44.2, for in several

<sup>1</sup> The division of Neilson and Thorndike is based upon that of Littledale (*Two Noble Kinsmen*: *N.S.S. Trans.*, series 2, part 15), and assigned I (28 ff.), II; III, iii-; IV; and V, i (1-17), ii, iii (104) ff. to Fletcher. Thorndike's division of *Henry VIII* is adapted from that of James Spedding (*N.S.S. Trans.*, 1874; Appendix, p. 14) and gives I, iii, iv; II, i, ii; III, i, ii b; IV; and V, ii-v, to Fletcher.

individual scenes this rises to 50 per cent. To be sure, we should reasonably expect a percentage of more than 21.5 of run-on lines in the former part of *Double Falsehood* if Shakspeare wrote it, but since Theobald's own average—as far as I can learn from his plays—was between 10 and 15 per cent, this reduction in the number of un-stopped lines would be a natural consequence of his revision. A consistent leveling such as the figures in the table indicate is just what we should expect to find in a play which had survived the revisions of Theobald and nobody knows how many other editors.

	<i>Double Falsehood</i>	PARTS ASSIGNED TO SHAKSPERE	
		<i>T. N. K.</i>	<i>Henry VIII</i>
Lines.....	693	883	1,077
Feminine endings.....	32	21.5	28
Run-on lines.....	21.5	52	54.6
W. and light endings.....	2.7	8.15	10.8
Mid-stopped speeches.....	44.5	64	68.5

	<i>Double Falsehood</i>	PARTS ASSIGNED TO FLETCHER	
		<i>T. N. K.</i>	<i>Henry VIII</i>
Lines.....	754	1,510	1,447
Feminine endings.....	44.2	62	58
Run-on lines.....	15.2	25.8	26
W. and light endings.....	39	23	.22
Mid-stopped speeches.....	30	48	51

A study of the words in *Double Falsehood* does not seem to be of any great value, and considering how much Theobald may have "adapted" it, this is not surprising. Yet I have found less than a dozen words that are too modern in sense to be used in a drama of Fletcher's. More important than this, it seems to me, is a study of Fletcher's sources. Miss Hatcher finds that ten of the plays in which he had a hand were taken from stories of Cervantes.<sup>1</sup> A comparison of these with their sources shows that the originals were used in somewhat the same way the story of Cardenio is here, except of course that *Double Falsehood* reveals little of Fletcher's sprightly invention. The dramatist was using material from Cervantes at about the time

<sup>1</sup> Miss O. L. Hatcher, *John Fletcher: A Study in Dramatic Method*, Chicago, 1905, p. 48.

the *History of Cardenio* must have been written. *Love's Pilgrimage* (1614?), *The Chances* (1615), and possibly *The Coxcomb* (1609-13), are examples of this fact. So it seems more than probable that the entry of Humphrey Moseley in the *Register* assigned the lost play correctly to Fletcher, at least, if not to Shakspeare.

A few other details ought to be noticed in passing. If Theobald really had an old manuscript of the *History of Cardenio*, he must have shortened it a great deal, for *Double Falsehood* is little more than half as long as many Elizabethan plays of the period under discussion. Verbal and phrasal parallels, on the other hand, such as those listed above from *Don Quixote* and *Double Falsehood*, are common between plays and their sources in Elizabethan times. I find similar parallels in *Two Noble Kinsmen* and the *Knights Tale*, in *Henry VIII* and Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey*, in *Love's Pilgrimage* and *The Two Damsels*, and in *The Chances* and *The Lady Cornelia*. The hearse trick (invading the convent by means of a fake funeral procession, and abducting Leonora) probably needs no other sources than the suggestions furnished by two incidents in other parts of *Don Quixote*, one in Book II, chap. v, and another near the end of the first part.

The line in *Double Falsehood* (III, i, 17), "None but itself can be its parallel," which Pope construed wittily into a weapon against Theobald, has several analogues. It may have found its way into *Double Falsehood* as a reminiscence of Seneca's *Hercules Furens* or of Massinger's *Duke of Milan*. In the former case it might well have been the work of an Elizabethan author. This work of Seneca's seems to have had an important influence on Shakspeare in particular.<sup>1</sup> Yet we know that Theobald had an exceptional familiarity with the classics.

It seems probable that the *Cardenio Double Falsehood* problem will never be solved to our complete satisfaction until more external

<sup>1</sup> J. W. Cunliffe, *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy*, London, 1893, pp. 18 ff. See *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1780, p. 507, for discussion. The line referred to in *Hercules Furens* is "Quaeris Alcidae parem? Nemo est nisi ipse" (84-85). In Massinger, it is

Her goodness doth distain comparison,  
And, but herself, admits no parallel.

—*Duke of Milan*, IV, iii.

It is worth nothing that Pope's version, "None but himself can be his parallel" (*Pope's Works*: ed. of Elwin and Courthope, 1886, X, 364), is closer to the lines of Seneca and Massinger. Both in Cassell's *Book of Quotations*, London, 1913, and Bartlett's famous work in all editions, Pope's line is attributed to Theobald.

evidence is brought to bear upon it. The small number of female parts in the play (two, except for a maid who speaks two lines), the source in Cervantes, the close verbal relation with the original in Shelton, and some other details, in a general way link it to the drama of the Elizabethans. But the shortness of it, the lifeless verse, some of the language, and the distinctly inferior dramatic quality are strong arguments against its being the work of Shakspeare or Fletcher either. We do not know how much Theobald revised, of course, but as a lover of Shakspeare, he would not be likely to make any more changes than he thought absolutely necessary. It is not impossible, on the other hand, that the manuscripts were revised several times before they reached him. The history of the *History of Cardenio* might make an interesting and enlightening chapter.

But speculation is futile. Internal evidence, as we have seen, gives no very conclusive results. From these investigations, however, the following facts seem to be established: (1) The immediate source of *Double Falsehood* was Shelton's *Don Quixote*. (2) The style of the play as a whole, and the second part in particular, differs appreciably from Theobald's acknowledged work. (3) There are unmistakable evidences of two styles. (4) These distinct styles show a general similarity to those in *Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Henry VIII*, which are now recognized as belonging to Shakspeare and Fletcher.

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